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THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA



Ballads and Poems

by Wesley Bissonnette

MOUNTAIN SPRAY

*Not the sunfall o'er the cliffside splashing green ;
Not the shower blown to rain dust down the glade ;
Not the grassiness beyond it blushing keen ;—
Matches, reaches, touches tiptoe one cascade !*

*When from holy unto holy like a prayer
Freighted with its peace returning, falls the sheen;
When the Spirit visualizing on the air
Floats a wreath of life to crown my "I have seen!"*

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Published by the Author
Colorado Springs, Colorado
306 Pike's Peak Avenue

PS 1101
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1902

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Ballads and Poems

Inspiration

While the mountains sink in their blue, blue dream
And only the tenderest white emerges,
My mind swims out like a turquoise stream
Till being resolves and ripples and surges
And pours like a dream upon their faces,
And soaks like sleep beneath their bases ;
Then back it swims like a strange gray tide
Unsatisfied ;
Sullen and slow as a pinewood pool
It coils itself and crouches, cool.
The world comes close to its deep green eye,
But it moveth not in its spiriting,
And it knoweth why ;
For my soul is bent to a mighty spring.

Pantherian, torrential, it takes the long bow
Of the wind's back, to dive
Voidward, and lunges
An arrow
Alive !
As the panther springs,
As the torrent plunges,
As the sun's needle stung to the nerve, to the marrow —
Ho !
From snapping link, from iron thong,
Over the brink like a silver gong
My soul booms out on its eagle wings,—
Swims out and shakes with the sun between
Its pennons green !
It would poise aright where the swallow swings
Between blue rings ;
It would skim like light where the bighorn leaps
On the grassy steeps ;
But height shrinks rare and space falls narrow ;
My soul drops back on fainting wings,
Outdared by a sheep,
Baulked by a sparrow !

A windy day and the sun at play.
I wonder, where is that soul of mine?
Out again on the third design,
Except this curling curiousness
Within be — what I only guess —
Sight crystallized to a second sense,
A farshot soul's near recompense.
Aloft the keeling pigeons swoop.
I leave the book for an open look
At the sky where the full-sailed pigeons ply,
And read as clear what the unseen Seer
Erases well with that gray-winged writing,—
(For a new world follows from each erasure
That brushes the old from the building azure)
With soaring dash, with pouring loop
Of overflow ; with tilt and crook
Of the headiest tumbler's free inditing ;
The sharp white slant another fetches,
That flourish ere alighting,
As once again
The Writer dips a feathery pen
Into the ether, and lo ! a style
That fails in the fantail's flowery sketches.
While the pigeons play I read away,
And listening inwardly the while
I hear my heart like a wild bee sing
And see my thought like a butterfly;
The spirit stretches
Reaching a yawn like an exquisite sound —
A peal angelic — that tingles (hark !)
To the faint profound.
A cascade bugles down the sky
From the chlorophyl peaks in the lazuli,
Answering soon my spirit's reach —
The plummet song of a faraway lark
Linked to a star, let down to teach
The upway to an unblown spark,
The outway to an ingrown dark,
Till song sprouts, winglets fledge around
The bare intent ; the purpose stark
Puts forth the plummage of desire ;
Life points away to another mark :
A sundog ? Nay, but ringed and bound,
The sun ringed well with rainbow fire !
For my soul has learned from the very ground.

Song

That which holds its shame a tear,
Truth but mirth, the mage's peer,
Man's prime laugh a goodly seer —
Such is song.

As the Seven strong
One masked star still weaving mere
Mortal weather here and here
Into music year by year
Men among.

Spun from joy's gold-circled sphere
Ringing through the roseflesh clear;
Love that played on Sydney's ear
All life long.

World and world goes wrong;
Routed lives laugh out, yet dear
Human dreams take heart from fear,
Rabble fate with fiat's cheer —
Such is song.

A Lyric of Life

Away from marching men!
The glory and the sigh,
Away, away!
We shall not die
Who hear and turn again —
Who hear the Voice to-day.

Away from subtle strife!
Dark care and cunning thought,
Away, away!
Where these are not
The Spirit calls to life,
Life and green hills and play.

Away from doubt and pain!
Love heals the world with spring;
Away, away!
And Love will sing
Our hearts to God again
And Christ into' our clay.

Two Creeds

UNMARTYRED

I had forgotten how I died ;
Whether for burning I was tied
Or strangled slowly by the cord
Or found death easy from the sword.

One day in heaven it was decreed
The slayers of the saints be freed,
And those they murdered have the joy
Of easing their lost soul's annoy.

I thought to search hell's deepest then
To end one's term of torment ; when
Far o'er the brink I looked to see
Christ's angel came and pitied me.

AN ANSWER

I walked with One the winding way
To that dark place, Gethsemane ;
And there upon the ground I lay
And sweat again in agony.

Again I saw the light grow hard
And drawing fiercely, gray with scorn,
The brows of Pilate ; afterward
My own grew soft to meet the thorn.

Up, up again that bitter hill
Beneath a dome of indigo
I bore the cross that could not kill ;
Then saw the soldiers wait below.

Until the sponge and hyssop came,
And then the spear ; but all between
There tossed a hissing sea of shame
The nails themselves were not so keen.

“ What hast thou done or tried to do
Of all the Master said or saith
That so thou shouldst not find it, too ? ”
Said Christ within, “ Thou shalt — by faith.”

Amor Dei

Yea, thou art strong beyond our song
And always-failing speech ;
Yet art thou meek when tonguesters seek
Thy strength in words to teach.
Thy touch is felt too faint to melt
Entire our dusty yoke ;
But by thy truth grow into youth
Younger always, heaven's folk.

Slave of the child, thou art too mild
To rule from iron throne ;
Man's tyrant still, thy handless will
Doth bit the beast alone.
Though systems crack to doomsday black
And lesser laws do shirk,
O atom-small, thou dost enthrall
The sweating sun to work.

Thou art that joy to girl and boy
Whose synonym is youth,
And to the sage forgetting age
Thou art a name for truth.
And others find thy meaning blind
Except it whisper, Faith ;
While still a few spell deep and true,
Duty — they dream thou saith.

Tis for thy need that men are freed
At last from life's long load ;
Twas for thy lack that God came back
One time and here abode.
On each new morn some babe unborn
Hears vaguely like a bird
What men of might went out last night
To prove — thy given word.

Though scoffers hold thy careless gold
But mortal-minted dross,
Spendthrifts of thee go hunger-free
Misers do pinch their loss.
Though all despair leave thee unfair,
A thing indeed for tears,
It is thy worth that makes our earth
The teacher of the spheres.

Thou art a strand in our weak hand
To catch the far lost line,
Did belt the stars to fight our wars
In mornings far lang syne.
Thou art a link hung from heaven's brink
To hook our floating chain
That shall bring back though angels lack
God's charities again.

Thou golden rope doth hold our hope
Even Christ from his clear space
Whereto we sing from ring to ring
And ridge of tinted grace ;
Till this swart round is clean unbound
A jewel in the blue,
Through thee a thing for worshipping
To those on planets new.

Bayard

Though many match my valor clear
When morn and victory meet,
But One may daunt my lonely cheer
When night shuts in defeat.

The Singer

In the dark sweet dawn when twilight dies
And the little joys by the thousand leap,
His song is deep
Like a man's who is glad of Paradise
When night brings sleep.

In the dreamless noon, in the dusty strife,
Always and ever at starry close
Of day's bright woes
He sings like a soul coming back to life
As morning grows.

Nature's School

How many secret things
Left in the soul, by nature touched, show life ;
And simple thoughts like slender shafts of grass
Shoot from enchanted springs.

The silence and surprise
Of strange, fern-haunted depths — the sun and shade —
Change well the white-dewed flower to a fairy waif
With spirits for her eyes.

Yea, wonder may be seen :
The plume of glory from the wild rose swings
The soft blue turf blooms through the forest gray,
And the light is green.

Who, at the sacred well,
Her mighty charm drinks from a mossy cup
With loving trust, at once may feel and know
Her still, creative spell.

How the Mountain Moved in Nineteen Hundred—

“ Mountain, mountain, come to me, ”
The healer sang, “ I have need of thee.
“ Though God-within-me a world affirm
The blindness of the veriest worm
Will split with doubt my universe ;
And the mustard tree can bear no fruit
Palpable either to man or brute
When the tiniest blade with question stirs.”
The healer sang but the mountain stood
Deaf, or dreaming—the thing was rude.
“ With nature waiting to be shown
You keep creation from her own
By seeming some reality
Whose rank persistence unearths a clan,—
Some occult Medo-Persian,
Reversing not at the King’s decree.
And the lowest wait till I demonstrate
Somewhat upon your haughty state.
Yea, beckon ! But never a second Mohammed,
With a double truth to shuffle and sham it,
Crawls down and follows his mandate free.
Up ! be thou cast upon the sea !
What ! Turk of a mountain, you sleep at my rap ?
You tumble from Egypt, old sickman ! I’m *Nap !* ”

Now whether he lost or whether he won,
Is unwritten history under the sun.
For along came an ambling theologue,
A stem of the rod of Princeton ; he
To moderate that healer’s glee
And circumscribe a natural rogue —
But how it fell out with that blessed pair
You may know some time — I don’t say where.
The point that I make, (succeed where I fail)
Is to finish a tale.

Say each good deed is an answered prayer,
Though a thousand years have gone to God
Since first it went up (when and where?)
Or hovered, waiting to be called
Into being, two worlds between ; —
Indeed, if your prayer has time to plod
From hope to hope, through age on age,
It must be grown to something sage
When it finally gets itself inwalled
In another brain on a plane still higher,
A crystallized duty that *must* aspire ; —
I ask to the fullness of desire ;
Exact, immediate, downright, bald,
“ Yea and amen ” to be felt and seen.
Bend ridges ! bow your shaggy sides !
Roll slope on slope from your green-haired back ;
Stretch, gray mass ! do a mammoth stride,
Get to your native ocean back !
And I, who must strain my faith on stilts
That God some fruition may not lack
Of a promise given to abide,
May step from the stocks. There ! — the rock pile tilts !

So far ; but no farther. Does fate
Say to faith, “ At best you ’re a drudge ;
“ My menial to date
What I predestinate ;
My thrall to bring forth,
When sweating ’s not worth,
The gifts that I grudge ” ?
Though the squint of an eye
Will twist it awry ;
Though an angled light
May erect it aright ;
Yet it stood by His faith,
In whom the word saith
I have being and breath :
Then it topples by mine —

That is, takes the incline
My Goliah of doubt
Allows to the lever
Of David — belief.
So, now — now or never —
Begins the grand rout :
Though it lost not a sand, though it shook not a leaf,
Though the fact intervenes,
The mountain *leans* !
And faith answers fate,
“ I create.”

My soul will prove you what you are,
Thou stiffnecked hill, or what I am ;
My soul will prove us, truth or sham :
With every sinew strung therefor
My thought runs up like a mountain ram ;
Majestic, elate,
On the pine-spiked rock
It poises calm
O'er the torrent's shock,
And measures unmoved with an eye as cool
As the crystal green of that couchant pool
The meaning of its tell-tale spill ;
Then leaps away like an antelope.
My antlered thought has a wilder will,
Though bred to the plain, to ridge the slope
Till its hoof-flints clink
At the azure brink
On the granite blue of the pinnacle.
Its knees are knit, and its nostrils fill
With the haughty breath of the first freeborn ;
Then budding pinions out of hope,
With sprouting horn,
With fledging hoof,
Sails outward for the grander scope,
Swims upward for an utter proof
To some more gallant point of being :
There drops a sheer line clearing truth

From dimness to this grace of seeing —
The lump ne'er stirred a jot, forsooth.
Then straightway through that burning cope,
Above the mountain's cloudy crown,
Where light must grope
And vision drown,
My balanced thought sinks cool and sane,
(For height was pain).
Diamond-beaked, glacier-weighted,
Lightning-streaked and life-freighted,
Down !
With horn, or hoof, or claw, or beak,
A one-winged beast, a pine-fledged dart,
It boreth down to the mountain's heart :
My thought lies coiled at the base of the peak.

The seed is set at the base of it
That will sing and sprout till its branches split
The sinews of that shameless heap —
That will spring and shout till its boughs lift out
(Showing that mountain's hollow heart)
The core of a most petrific doubt,
And drop — a shadow upon the deep ;
While the powdered crust of that dead mistrust
Sprinkles its leaves with the faithless dust.
And you my soul play well your part
To dance meanwhile to your little rhyme,
“ It will move in time, it will move in time.”

“ But it lies already below the sea,
Green again where the mountain lies ;
For time is ever eternity ; ”
Says the Master flowing full around
And in and out of my being's bound :
“ And I, even I, who am God in thee,
Must affirm to exist, must believe to be.
How long, how long till you realize ?
Your mountain sank when you spoke from Me.”

At the End of a Ball

Here in the rout again
We meet : such a throng !
The gravedigger's work was vain.
We're both dead how long ?

Somewhat pale, perhaps ;
Strange, if you will :
I'll swear though, (a spirit's lapse)
You're a star still.

Walk by this shadowed wall,
We'll talk as before
The deluge, the downfall ;
Then dance and — no more.

Not a mouse to hear, pet ;
They can't dig so low ;
And the angels of our set
Don't fly, you know.

“ Unfaithful ! ” What a word !
“ Weak ? ” That's no better.
“ Traitor ” would be absurd ;
You kept not a letter.

“ Praise then ? ” Well, I would say,
Who holds your hand,
More than the world may
Holds at command.

Yet the danger's there, too,
To curse or to bless ;
My neighbors might know you,
Some one might guess —

Whisper it, even shout
In the very street ;
Then, with my secret out,
You 'd be complete.

You know what ears have walls,
And how stories rave ;
They talk French, too, at balls
Here beyond the grave.

Who you were, what you were,
How it befell ;
My perfect revenge, dear,
Is never to tell.

You must go quiet through
The hall (who 's the host ?).
Who takes note of you,
Poor little ghost ?

I give you burning fame ?
That were worth hell.
And also without a name
Heaven's not well.

" Bon Dieu ! " Shriek now.
Darling, don't fret.
To remember is yours, I vow
Mine 's to forget.

What ! Would you ? — So now
The last. Again ? Death !
I 'm burning. My Christ ! the
pain !
It 's fire — your breath !

Westward-Ho

The sunset falls like a lashing curl
Where the good land lies,
Remote and serene in the glory that flies
The human whirl.

We rise on a mount that springs and rears ;
From its magic poise
Our lives are large to run and rejoice
For a thousand years.

Not a mountain's heave, nor a hill's red crest
Stops our hearts in chase
As we urge the sun in his wide green race
Through the boundless West.

From the weary coast, from the world of news,
We are far asleep ;
But our dreams are grand, and our wild steeds leap
With joy for thews.

By the south brave wind of a golden zone
Our manes are fanned ;
We feel the rain of a rare sweet strand
Strange regions own.

The loud range rings to the long deep low
Of the tribes of home ;
But hue and cry to the clans that roam
Our great horns blow.

From the shore of men, from the marge they throng,
Not a word comes in ;
Nor the sound of the tawny winds is kin
To their wary song.

The courier breeze that the cloud-things ride
Not a rumor brings
From a thousand leagues where the long grass sings
On every side.

A Ballad of Earth and Heaven

Not a rocket reddens, and the signals all unlitten ;
Not a streak of pity from the heart of man to trace ;
Nor the faces round her flushing as our God with shame were
smitten
When a mother's child has fallen and men trample on her face.

Hail of choral heavens to the Morning Star ascending ;
Higher still than Stephen's, hark ! how silverly it bleats !
Now the sunburst of the sainted and the souls like lilies bending
When a sister of the Master stoops to Mary-of-the-Streets.

Ne'er a hail of helping, but the sound of awful hushing ;
Ne'er a drop to quench the brand that sets the world aflame ;
But the tongues of hissing waters at the smoking flax are rushing
When a father's child has risen and she walks upon her shame.

Lo ! the floodgates bending with the hope that overglorys ;
Seraphim are stirring, see ! the Heart of heaven beats !
While the saints are thronging tiptoe and the angels write the story
How a daughter of our God is lifting Mary-of-the-Streets.

The Torn Rose

A white, white rose in a garden blows
And a red rose here by the street :
And one has fallen and here it lies
Torn, and tossed at your feet.

Many a flower falls and away,
Many a one still blows :
The briar bloom and the rose of gloom,
And the pale, perfect rose.

But, O that a bud of the true, true blood
And round, red heart abeat —
O that the rose of maidenhood
Should be torn and tossed in the street.

The Presence

Me, with eyes of your spirit,
My words, with the ears of your flesh ——
And ye who are old shall inherit,
And ye who are dry shall refresh.

Ye, with the lips of His giving,
Me, ye shall eat for your bread,
Till I am the flesh of the living
As I am the breath of the dead.

From the Valley

Here the daylight's dying flutter and the sheen
Shaken from the tumbled leaves where evening clings;
There the mountains, holy, holden, blue between,
Ah! and farther, fainter, there it falls and swings!

Just a thread, a throb, of life — a waterfall!
Such a whiteness hailing cool as star or sail.
Foam of morning hushed to light in evening's call,
Heartward, soulward comes the stillness of its hail.

Here the splendor laid like water green and bright;
There the spray — the blessing lapped around your feet;
Here the sun in heart and eyes, and there the night;
Ah, and there the spirit falling cool and sweet!

The Bosom of Peace

The thought of Thee is a green retreat
Beside a silver pool,
With dew upon the bank so sweet
To keep my spirit cool.
And there my heart lies down at rest
And still my spirit lies
With moon and stars above thy breast
All in the violet skies.

The thought of Thee is a green retreat
Against the noonday sun
To shade my soul in a valley sweet
Where holy waters run.
And thither runs my heart away
From all its own dear strife
To wake the birds at break of day
And hear the Lark of Life.

The Blue Bird

Up with the sun !
See yonder blue dart flashed,
Streaking the grass, a star of living fun,
Hither tossed, thither dashed
Peopling a good half-acre, headlong mote ;
And then
Then the first note
Flies hither from the orchard there.
Now hear that thick sweet volley : in a trice
He spills the black wine of the silence : rare !
Your true blue worshipper hath set afloat
And stringeth (dew on air)
A rosary whose every bead 's a prayer
Whereon a saint might dote.
Of long lost love again,
Come poet, who 'd entice
The purple to thy pen.
Hark ! hark ! all aware,
Twice
It happened in the wet white orchard there.

Come, masters, and compete.
Ship your worn wares and hoardings overlong,
Of chiseled thought and careful song
That seldom rounds out one full note complete ;
Come, let th' apprentice learn,
Stand once, wild wonderling,
Tiptoeing at the topmost turn
Where one bird's panic fire fears not to burn.
Come, masters, kneel to greet
His highness, hear him ring,
Our first past master, tilting to his prong.
Hear now the bright beak spurn
The echoing, amber, empty depth of morn
To whet his sweetness in the ivory dawn.
Far in the crystal rod
Clinks at the gate to rout the dreams abroad ;
And bolder, beak atwirl, ay, sword wide drawn,
Taps at the gate of horn.
Laugh masters, nothing awed ;
That 's homage due your king,
Bird of the young time, bluest of the year,
Green heart and fount of spring.
Deliberate. You heard it ! That 's how God
Did twice the perfect thing.

The Ballad of Children of the Snow

Come, ye world-bewildered children, come ye orphans of the cold,
Ye the drift of many winters, ye the strays of many a fold;
Where the blessed fairies beckon to the children of the snow
To the pussy willow country and the fairies we will go.

O your curly heads are gray with rime, your finger tips are blue;
They would frost the silver flowers, they would blast the baby dew;
Yet the logwood lives a little in the ashes of the days
And our strangeness warms around us like a fur of wintry haze.

Now with frosty hearts a-melting, ho! we strike the twinkling trail;
Hark! the reindeer of the starland belled with morning glories pale!
To the dearest of the valleys in the softest land we'll go
To be brownies in the meadows, little children of the snow.

Lag the sledges in the stillness; comes a cheer of cricket tunes,
And the ragged wintry whiteness blown to thistledown balloons;
Round the hedges through the orchards steal the natives of the past,
Vagrant flakes of drifted summer storming home again at last.

Darker loom the banks, the water; ghostlier gleams the sycamore:
There we sought our Indian fathers in the afternoons of yore,
When we launched his golden feathers on the green mid-meadow
glow
And we sailed our glorious fancies ho-and-ho and Westward-ho!

Now we beach the good ship Rover and she rolls upon her side,
Just a faint and battered phantom creeping home at clover tide:
Now to rummage through that clover till we wake the sleeping bees
For the wild wild dreams a-dripping from those honeyed argosies.

Here we'll find our big white brothers piling summer from the west,
Like great galleons of cotton into Christmas service pressed;
When those summer clouds are drifting, arms around their necks
we'll go
Through the pussy willow country, little children of the snow.

Come, ye long bewintered worldlings, bitter waifs of hungry sky ;
Ye must cache your frozen treasures, toss your tattered blankets by ;
Then we'll tent below the buttercups and never think of harm
If the snowing of the cottonwoods should tuck us snug and warm.

Ye shall heed no more the war-blow nor the drumbeat loud
"be strong!"

But a milky river's gurgle broken by a mammy's song :
Ye shall hear no more the bugles tugging when the blood is slow,
But a lie-and-love-me lullaby, my children of the snow.

Where the furry hollows gather from the breasts of all the hills
We will find the wispsy baskets that the crooning water stills ;
Ah, and then forgotten mothers rocking childless arms thereby
Till we warm those loving cradles to the wonder of a cry.

Soon we'll steal from early kisses while the early dew abides
Down between the feathered hollows where the downy yellow guides,
There we'll meet our faithful playmates and we'll stay with them
and grow
Till our eyes are very blue again, my children of the snow.

Then we'll sack the gypsies' ingle in the robbers' wood for play,
But we'll guard our gentle sisters when the cows are in the way ;
Till a dearer duty chides us with the hunter's moon for cheer
And the shyest of the maidens flutter out like silver deer.

Though we go the mountains over, though we pass the deepest seas,
Yet we lack their tender comforts and their bashful courtesies.
Where, O where, but in the country where the hills are green and
low
Will we find our sweethearts waiting — where the pussy willows
grow ?

* * * * *

Through the roar of dwindling flurries hear ye not a grounded charm
Of the kindly kitchen fairies and their purring underswarm ?
See ye not a comely woman visioned in a hallowed youth
With the living hope that stoops her, touching baby lips with truth ?

Come ye world-bewildered children, come ye orphans of the cold
Like the drift of many winters, houseless, grizzled, bleak and old ;
Ye shall see your homely fires with the hearts of long ago,
And the fairy faces smiling to the children of the snow.

What Francis the Friar Showed to the Abbot of Cîteaux

O what hast thou read in the holy book ?
Thou hast read strange matter, I trow.
“ He will make an end, he will make an end ;
And that ’s what the Lord will do.”

His mercy endures, his mercy endures
For aye as the psalmist saith.
What saith a monk ? “ When He returns,
On earth will he find faith ? ”

What straweth the leaves of the saintly writ
Like a withering snowfall wan ?
“ They are all fulfilled, they are all fulfilled
From Matthew to Saint John.”

Meseemeth me blind with a great bleaching’
Doth the ghostly parchment stare.
“ Good Abbe, a blast from the leper ’s chink
Twines death sheen in thine hair.

What boreth our walls like an auger round
And sucketh all air away ?
“ The rock on the Rock shall reek not age
When time goes tottering gray.”

What sereth the sun like an horrent cast
From the white bowel of hell ?
“ Tis a weird of light in an old world storm
Tolled down for earth’s black bell.

What seemeth, and what that shaketh my monk
As his heart were a bag of bones ?
“ An awful milling at this world’s end
Between the swirling stones.”

What more ! what more ! that his eyes are blanched,
And why hath the good monk kneeled ?
“ The flakes burst out from the rolling balls :
All flesh, all world’s flesh, pealed.”

What seemeth, what yet, that an earth-brown monk
Like a pale wracked woman should rave ?
“ They drop like a rain of stricken lights,
And a light stands over each grave.”

Say yet, say yet, ere the devil smoke out
From gutter where black tongue lolls.
“ They are rising up ; their bodies rise up ;
On the graves they meet their souls.”

What is this dread light makes the sun midnight ?
“ Tis God’s eye searching wide.
Tis the white horror whirling on,
That day, that day, all abide.”

Though mystery deepens with duty,
The dream is the bringer of youth ;
Though life is the secret of beauty
Yet love is the meaning of truth.

B a n q u o

The past is dead.
The bloodstain is no more
Upon the hand ; the guilt, the dream, the dread
Is o’er.

The past is dead.
Yea, buried year by year ;
And darest thou on the future lift thy head,
O Fear ?

A Ballad of Like and Like

A tutor went from his classics down
To seek the rose of this mundane load,
But the lad who walked from the factory town
Saw the teamster's lass on the Wellington road.

One spoke her fair with a scholar's bow,
And this to the teacher of men she said :
" Now I have a lad with an open brow,
And I'll have no man with a fox's head.

He called her love and glory and fame,
And all abashed was the teamster's girl ;
Though she laughed for the sound of her German
name
From the lad she loved, with a down-drawn curl.

Then he weighed a life for the maiden's vow,
But a woman's mite did she choose instead :
" O more is the light of his open brow
Than a mine of gold in a fox's head."

And then he did what a strong man could,
For all his heart unbared he showed :
With a tear she spoke, " You are all too good
For a teamster's lass on the Wellington road."

So the end of his lore, it was " Pity me now !"
And the whole of her wisdom, " O I shall wed
The lad that I love, with the open brow,
And not the man with the fox's head."

Then history, science, arithmetic,
And he called the arts to help him, too ;
But their tongues were tied by nature's trick
And a lassie's knot they could not undo.

For she loved the lad with the open brow,
Though he worked her woe till they found him
dead ;
But she knew not why and he knew not how
She feared the man with the fox's head.

The Ballad of the Buckeye Maid

You may dream of your lady from over the sea
Like Helen, the love of the long ago ;
But leave just a dear alive gypsy to me
With the corn-tassel curl on her brow sunning low.

Your bird may pine in a deathless rue
For Erin, the kern of the outre-mer ;
My squirrel, he says that the emerald true
Is an ever green heart near the Belle Riviere.

Her peach-blow beauties let Michigan keep,
Let Kansas yellow her seven-ply braids ;
Two low-lashed glories a summer long deep,
And the clearaway curls are a Buckeye maid's.

For a land of honey and rivers of wine
There is holy writ of the truth most wise
For the Maumee dreams like a richer Rhine
Through the promised land in her amber eyes.

You may sink your soul to the nether lights
For a matchless mine and a load of sin ;
The buttercups flash from the dimple-down whites
Like free, free gold when she dips her chin.

O pale are the waters Burgun'dy distills,
Vague is the bloom o'er the Sicilies shed,
To the cheek of a witch on the wild cherry hills
And the tang of a heart in its come-and-go red.

You may skim to the poles or the Andes pass,
I will tether my fate to a runaway curl,
Brown, true brown, from the mother mass —
To the home-turning tress of that Buckeye girl.

You may dream of your lady from over the sea :
The dear or the dead, she may twinkle a hand ;
My long ago love and my love to be
Is the corn-tassel maid of the chestnut land.

The Ballad of the Iowa Lass

I have sailed long since to the Beulah land
On the long ago drowse of a Sabbath morn,
But my dream comes home from the winewashed
strand
To a second Ruth in the sunset corn.

She stands at eve in the orange flame
Where the sunflowers droop at the end of day,
And the rain wind ripples the heather bell name
Of that farmer's daughter in Iowa.

You may cruise in the South for an old-world prize
On the Spanish Main of a gypsy's lights;
North into wonder I'll star in her eyes
On their indigo waters and shadowy whites.

Of another Cortez though fame not avers
For a mightier deed on a thread more fine,
I would cross to Mars on a strand of hers —
That Iowa girl with the hair divine.

You may hunt for an empress in Trebizond,
You may search for a queen in Tokio, too;
But the Maid of Fire is far and beyond
A whiter princess in Waterloo.

The fleece of gold for Jason, the dead.
Tis pale as chaff in a harvest rare.
You may glean the world for her sunset head
And the red, red grain of her wonderful hair.

One Dante blessed with her soul's sweet dew;
Not grass, nor sky, nor sea, nor pearl,
Can blend in the true like the deep Scotch blue
In the faraway eyes of that Iowa girl.

The Call of the Greeks

Come invaders ! quick, barbarians ! Fatherland, pour out your hording—
Fertile fire fusing colors, burning green ; the ground is ripe.
Sow the host to spring and shoot like giant grass for overlording
Earth as we are, only lines left for the lion in the type.

Europe ! Europe ! we to you, you to Asia wail untiring
After youth, for glamor calling, something golden, all things new.
West of westmost West lies Asia flowing for the world's desiring,
You the father- from the motherland milk, Europe ; we from you.

Many a suckling must be mightened, mouth and knees to earth, back
arching
Till the strength of sea swims over in his eyes the emerald brink :
Give your breast and spur the mighty, sing the mountains into marching,
Swamping height and depth of drouth and desert till hell quail
and shrink.

“ Hark ! Disaster ! ’Ware, disaster ! ” wail the Fabians falling under,
Snowed and strawed in world abysses, sapless marble, frustrate white.
Hail your downfall, spent delayers ! Speed the blow that rives asunder
All the futile, even you, you, you, the mowed grass, feel the right.

Help, barbarians ! Hurl up armfuls ! Turn up truth by overturning :
Powder rock ; melt soils for mortar, thrusting in your hairy surge,
Blue black flowing, strong as water sinewed deep with wine, in burning,
Manes of fire, falling yellow, fresh as cornsilk.— Mix and merge.

Dark the loam-tide grows above us ; dense the thicket of the nations :
Wilderness to nurse the man child that will wear down the wild
whole.

Carbon stores the sun in darkness ; spread the saving inundation —
Blood that smokes with live breath, steaming salts that taste of soul.

Drown the residue ! Wash out the wreck of race ! Make sure
despoiling !

Save the germ-shape in a sleep until the next true diver seeks.
Beauty in the bulk will batton savored deeper for assoiling :
Now to harry, roll, and furrow ; lay the last of us — the Greeks !

The Ballad of the Hundred and Fourty-Four —

Ye shall lift a rapture from a locked despair,
Link the world's black cataract to a wreath of prayer,
When the great day whitens thunderous with the Word
And His feet shall touch the mountains into melting for their Lord.

Ye shall tread in softness wrought from flints of scorn,
Stand on kneeling glories fashioned out of thorn,
When the mighty whisper, when the proudest creep,
All unshamed before the throne of grace, O ye shall dance and leap.

When the awful Splendor turns to sudden night
All unlighted faces, ye shall gather light;
When an hallowed brightness searches like a sword,
Then the graves shall burn within them till they burst before the Lord.

Slaves shall lead their masters bound in chains of love,
Dungeons utter wisdom unto thrones thereof;
Cæsar shall go humbly, emperors shall creep,
When ye lift your crowns like cymbals and the glories from
 them sweep.

When all living death shall vanish at God's breath
Yet your dying life shall cast a bridge on death;
When the Christ within you lives a golden cord
To bear the armies of the flesh across to meet the Lord.

Ye shall stand on kingdoms, without lack or scaith,
Captured from the crumbling in the breach of faith.
Stars and suns shall stumble, time shall fall and sleep
When within the Fount of Life ye drink the Living Deep.

When the slain and conquered to the trump arise,
Stephen of the sungaze, Paul with wounded eyes;
Then the Dove shall lift you from the stricken horde
To the evermore-expanding and the always-nearing Lord.

A Dream of Daniel

Lo, I was on the ramparts to the north
After the feast in Babylon's night of nights,
And saw Beltshazzer's form die out of God
Till neither edge nor dimness stayed of him.
Then was I lifted on the dream to sight
That mine eyes went before me in the world;
For vision had been sucked from out my soul
By two low moons beyond a mortal name:
And all the firmament was the face of One.
Thereon the light hung in a sweat of glory
Like rainbows interlinked with chains of tears.
His brows were burning in eternity
Outglobing space with beauty; they were sweet,
Sore with the hope that sere'd them bright on earth;
Yet love was dreaming where they had been marred,
And warmed the long white shadow of the grave.
Yea, immortality was made a smile
And meet for human sipping on his lips.
Far in the waters of infinity
The stars were drowning from that mystic face
Like little lights diminishing in smoke.
Then all the firmament was the face of Him
To glass the universe in one sole eye.
Most tremulously shone the dot of sun
A drop of shuddering blackness palpitant,
While under him a Shadow swam, unkempt,
With shape and eyes and hands and feet and wings,
And, red toward the midst where blood might feed
A core of hate, pulsed downward fiery blue
And weblike from its belly touched the earth
A ball of haze; for, from that baggy touch,
A withering dust of goldfame smothered her
And clung a shirt of glittering miracles
To martyr faith; that ancient hairiness,
Once thatched the shaggy virtue of her prime,
Was sing'd by lust away; now swathed in sin

She strangled slowly in the chain of down
But shook for naught the shameless coil, for still
The meshes of that mighty spirit held,
And all his ends were hooked upon the world.
Now were they going in that swirl of awe —
Like fly and spider — in the web of time.
Now were they writhen in the old gray storm
And withering of God's wrath : how long it seemed !
At length the thought was finished in His hands ;
Meseemed God's mind moved near and made a light.
Then wasted like a sore the worm of time :
Hung loose the pendent bowel of the void !
Above this haggard earth came like a ghost
An awful whiteness to inhabit space
As of the blanching books ; then out of that
Arose a double wonder builded out,
Yea, by the Father's mind into such brows,
So big with mercy and so low with love.
Ah ! this world could not see by any eye
Without nor yet within : it knew Him not.

* * * * *

They were a people with a lying mind
That strove to weave a haze before the day
Of their Lord's nearing, veiled it in a guess ;
For they had learned by rote to put away,
And made the prize of duty to divorce
The living wife of faith, and lewd through doubt
With bare conjecture did adultery.
One stood within the markets, prostitute,
Who bore upon her parts a fair bold name.
She should have been bright Truth, the one pure pearl,
Who wore such gravure ; she, but robed in shame,
Split wide the gauze and called the rent divine,
And dubbed the fierce exposure Destiny.
Her dusty haloes ringed the gilded saints

Who thronged her for a century and cried
"To know, to know, to know, is great, is great"—
An Ephesus of goldsmiths dinning forth
The trade that was the worship of the world.
Nor was a nation found on earth ashamed;
Yet all their glory was a thong of brass
That hissed to heaven from a snaky coil
While little as a crimped shell it seemed
Before that moving stillness sent before
To hush the edges of approach divine,
For all the firmament was the face of Christ
Descending! Then that other spirit stooped,
A tarnished sun obliterating light,
With arms that blackened round about the earth
And on the forefront of his darkness burned
"The Wisdom of the Ages" wrought in blood;
And under that the tribes went up to doom
Whose light was all the grossness of their hearts.
Some sucked the aching substance out of life
And left the shell for truth, denying thus,
With "O this hampering of a fleshly gear!"
"These yoking phantoms that do gall the mind."
And "O this body of God's nothingness."
Within the porches were the mockers heard,
"See the much motliness of Christ's own wear."
With togas bleached and holden from the swine
Upon the highways broad the scorners went
Blanching their hearts with white hauteurs of thought
And did enamel life with a mirage
Reflecting their own shadow for a hope,
As if the gift eternal were a gloss
Rubbed over the sheer deathliness of death.
And they were sealed and heard no cry if one
Cried the great quickness of His terribleness
Till flaming from her cosmos leapt the earth
And sun and moon and stars together seethed
With the wide universe through one sole eye.
Then all the firmament was the face of Christ.

Two Prayers

THE LEPER'S

Lord, do behold thy wasted one to-day,
Thy cripple, hallowed not by any glow
Or light purged from this fever of decay :
Lord, bring thy pity low,
Quench with that dew this nigh heart bursting throe.
Yea, Father, make it so :
Thy stroke of mercy broaden to my day
From that red core of Jesus' earth-got woe
(Now changed, God's ruby worn in heaven alway)
That one whole beam may cure this lump for aye.

Thou who dost keep the fastness of thy praise
In lowly hearts, shut not against my prayer
Abashed, afraid, the awful gates of grace,
But from the cincture of thy purest rays,
Behold from thy demesnes
How my sore faith on its own weakness preys,
And must be fortified with all despair
And must be hedged about
With pain and propped by doubt
(That broken reed whereon the starveling leans
Which pierceth faith with famine from without)
And wan with hoping creepeth down the days
Wreathed but with withered greens
Toward old age as to some dismal lair ;
There blind with labor, wildered by the rod,
Ah, in that hoary snare
Of unkempt memories and lost desires,
Forlorn, where honor hath not trod,
There in that dreamless mire
It gropes toward the dead and drops from God.

Then Peter's shadow on that poor man fell
And he rose up and worshipped Jesus — well.

THE PRAYER OF PETER

Lord, my Lord's Lord, who art
My Master's Master also, who was dead
One time, but now, O now
Lives more to Thee in us than when his heart
Was broken so and bled,
Ay, and made dearest drink and beauteous bread
Meet for our weakness ; crumbled, ground somehow,
That life so eaten might not dart
Beyond the fortitude of this wild flesh
The pang divine indeed,
And marred even to this use that we be fed : —
Thou, Father of my hunger, keep it fresh
And deeper craving breed ;
Forgive the stale and meager appetite
That tasteth not in tears,
Of sweet eternity the golden tang ;
Forgive the vain delight
Of fancies eaten where scant grace appears
For little asking of the saving pang
And sorrow's dark but pure and perfect taint :
Lord of my thirst, be gentle not to spare
My narrow need of water ; feed the faint
Dry sickness of my soul to mortal fire
Till it consume the flesh and be not cursed :
Yea, spear the feet infirm of low desire ;
Make my too fearful hope like famished saint
Outfast its own despair ;
Then from my spirit do illume my faith
To light the builded gloom of lonely prayer
Till its white shaft wreathed near thy throne doth burst !
Yea, give the childwise faith
That needs no miracle to make it live
Nor other manna than the word thou saith,
But feedeth on the ever simple fare
Of daily good, the bread thy Word doth give.

So fasting, may the Master find not me
Ungenerous of my rich poverty.

A Spell

Did the boughs stir as a bird flew by,
Or the wind dream? Was the moss brushed by a golden wing?
Did the faint grass sound or a spirit of sun and dew
Its tremulous cymbal ring?

The green leaf chimed like a bell;
A fern stem shot from the soil and charmed the air;
A white flower blossomed to death; nay, a wood nymph bloomed
And stole into life unaware.

The Time of Need

Not when the adverse current bears me far
Below the light of sun or moon or star;
But when fair fortune shows a morning brow
On the full tide I cry "God help me — now,"

For this His truth: the depths must always be
Founded before the high line of the sea
Where green hills heavenward play; but not on Pride
Whose hollows fall to hell, Lord, let me ride.

To a Higher Critic

If you found a loss the word could not fulfil,
Say the life beyond the symbol had to flow;
If you found the vessel wrought to warp and spill,
Say the spirit flawed the crystal just to grow.

At School

The fool was asked and he stood and cried
"We are what we are by laws."
The philosopher waited until he died
And wrote for his peace "Because."
The Spirit started as if to leave
But stayed for one soul's "I believe."

Mental Science

Come, we will think success, not failure, friends,
For in our thought the world begins and ends.
"The kingdom is within" — This great without
Is what our minds are now, if we not doubt.

Western Roses

Hail the roses ! ho ! the roses of the West !

Where the world ends and the heart lifts seaward-ho :
Trail the sun to Eldorado and to rest ;
There the true Pacific roses — there they blow !

Not the mountains' silver beck at break of day,

Not the fountains' denser moonlight, island dew,
But the green of home a thousand leagues away,
Fades the roses at the world's end, Santa Cruz.

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